

# 14 Vital Skills for Supervisors

Mastering Constructive Confrontation



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# Mastering Constructive Confrontation

Speak with clarity and purpose for maximum results.

# Constructive Confrontation

Skill  
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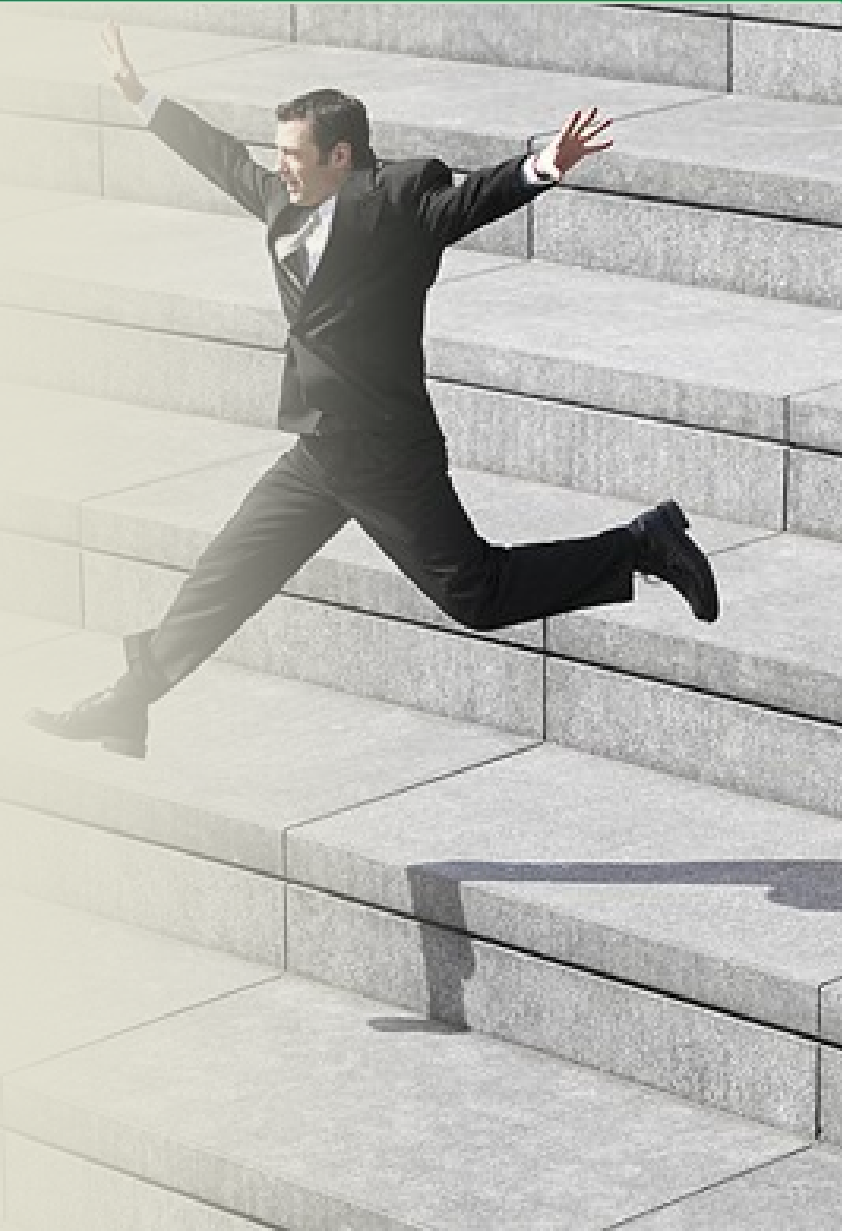
- Many supervisors dread confronting employees
  - It's often easier to drop hints and make indirect threats...
  - Rather than initiate a confrontation 🔊
- Constructive Confrontation works best when:
  - Organize your thoughts in advance
  - Map out what to say so that you follow a clear, logical framework



# Steps to Success






## Skill 3

1. Summarize the situation from the employee's point of view
  - Reflect on what the worker has said and recall specific phrases, examples and arguments you've heard
2. Ask for confirmation
  - Ask a neutrally worded question to confirm that you've captured his or her views accurately



# Steps to Success

## Skill 3

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3. Dignify the employee's views—and tie them to the core issue.
    - Recognize the individual's right to adopt that perspective
  - Then, connect what the employee believes to what you believe must happen next



# An Example of the Three-Step Process

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1. Bill, a mail-room worker, has responded to many warnings about his lackadaisical approach to his job by insisting that it's simply his personality




1 2 3



# An Example of the Three-Step Process

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1. Summarize Bill's comments and ask, "Would you agree that's how you've responded to this issue in the past?"



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# An Example of the Three-Step Process

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3. Once he agrees, say,
    1. “Bill, I understand that you see yourself as a solid contributor here, and I’m glad you want to succeed at your job.”
    2. “At this point, however, the challenge you face is to succeed *not on the terms you’ve set for yourself, but on the terms I lay out—the job requirements.*”
  - Most employees will be more receptive to your request once their views have been recognized in a fair way.

1 2 3



# Warning

## Skill 3

- A confrontation should not degenerate into a bossy lecture
- Avoid ultimatums; they usually backfire by triggering resistance
- Avoid calling attention  to what you don't want to do
  - You risk having the employee think that you really are focused on doing the thing you say you don't want to do!
  - Your intentions will doubted or won't be believed



- Use “Help Me Understand” statements to set a positive, non-threatening tone
- Example:
  - “Help me understand what it means when you say you won’t fight with your coworkers and then you engage in a series of fights within a week.”



# It's True

## Skill 3

- If you're convinced a confrontation will fail to produce a positive result, it'll show from the moment you open your mouth
- To increase the odds of a positive outcome enter a confrontation with an open mind
- No one should be able to tell that you have lost your faith in the employee

